AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives every assistance and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

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WHOLE NO. 1748 — WILLIAM GREEN, President — WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1944 — GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer — VOL. 34, NO. 41

WE PLEDGE—
1 MILLION DOLLARS
IN WAR BONDS
FOR VICTORY

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Braving stormy weather and inclement skies, more than a score of AFL representatives became "shipmates" of the U. S. Navy last week aboard an LCI (Landing Craft, Infantry) which cruised Chesapeake Bay and on an inspection trip of three amphibious training bases.

The tour was undertaken by invitation of the Incentive Division of the Navy to the American Federation of Labor. One of the AFL guests, John E. Rooney, President of the Operative Plasterers' International Association, came all the way from Cleveland to get aboard.

On the ship, the AFL representatives shared the life of Navy personnel, eating the same G. I. rations and sleeping in the same bunks regularly assigned to troops aboard landing craft.

As one who participated, we can truthfully report that the AFL group enjoyed every minute of the trip—even getting up at 5:30 a. m. But perhaps the most popular feature of the excursion was the opportunity to fire the ship's 20 millimeter anti-aircraft gun at a target. The best shots were Boris Shishkin, AFL economist and Bryce Holcombe, of the Painters and Decorators, who scored two direct hits apiece.

Log of the Trip

The AFL group started out from Washington aboard a Navy bus, usually used to transport industrees, at 4 P. M. for the amphibious base at Solomon's Island in the Chesapeake. After dinner, the group was conducted through various schools where crews and officers of landing craft are given a two-week course before qualifying for active service.

In the recreation hall, the AFL guests heard a young sailor describe his experiences as a member of a fire-fighting outfit during the invasions of Africa, Sicily and Italy. He told a harrowing story of struggling to put out a blaze aboard an ammunition ship off Sicily. The fight took seventy-two hours and every moment the members of the fire-fighting squad had to face the fact that the whole ship might blow up. But they saved it. This young man had been a member of the International Association of Fire Fighters in civilian life and his talk proved especially interesting to two members of the AFL party—President Fred Baer and Secretary-Treasurer George Richardson of that union.

It was cold and raining when the group went aboard the LCI No. 398 at 9 P. M. for the overnight trip to Little Creek, Virginia. However, the waters of the bay remained calm and everyone slept well. No cases of seasickness were reported.

It was still cold and raining at 5:30 a. m. the next morning when the order came to "hit the deck." After a hurried breakfast, the group put on foul weather gear provided by the skipper of the ship and started out on an inspection tour of Camp Bradford, eight miles away, where the Navy trains men for LST's (Landing Ship, Tank).

Fortunately, the rain lifted and although the skies remained cloudy during the entire day. The first stop was at a night vision school where the sailors are taught how to keep alert on watch and how to detect even the shadows of ships on the horizon.

Through the Maze

Emerging from the thick gloom of this room, the labor representatives were put through a "maze" filled with many devices designed to trip up and confound the unwary. After this fight was provided for the guests but the sailors have to learn to negotiate this obstacle course in pitch dark.

The next stop was at a typical classroom where a Navy officer explained with the aid of ship models how an amphibious invasion attack on a beach is organized and operated.

Returning to Little Creek, the party was conducted aboard an LST and an LSM (Landing Ship, Medium). Some of the oldsters on the trip were puffing a bit from climbing up steep ship ladders when they got back to dry land.

Our LCI looked and felt like home when we went aboard at 11 A. M. for the return trip. After a hearty luncheon, the guests took part in various deck activities culminating in shooting at a floating target 400 yards off. When the target was hauled back on board, it was riddled with holes.

As a final surprise, the LCI ran right on the beach at Cape Point, Md., threw over its landing ramps and the guests walked dryshod to the beach where a Navy bus was awaiting them for the ride back to Washington. Before departing, the AFL representatives joined in a round of cheers for the skipper, the crew and Lieut. Siefert who conducted the trip for the Incentive Division.

Among those not previously mentioned who made the trip were President William C. Doherty, of the National Letter Carriers Association; President Foster Parrott, of the Textile Workers; Draftsmen and Architects; President Chester A. Harvey, of the Railway Mail Association; Secretary-Treasurer I. M. Ornburn, of the Union Label Trade Department; Vice President William G. Calvin, of the Bookbinders; Joseph A. Padway, counsel for the AFL; O. B. Soucie, Operating Engineers; James Myles, Operative Plasterers; Lewis G. Hines, AFL Legislative Representative and James Wilson, of the ILO.

Membership Nears 7-Million Mark

Washington, D. C.—Membership of the American Federation of Labor now stands at the highest point in its sixty-four year history, AFL Secretary-Treasurer George Meany announced.

The total dues-paid membership of the Federation as of August 31, the close of the AFL's fiscal year, was 6,806,913. This represents a net gain of 242,772 over the August figure of 1943, when the total was 6,564,141.

Mr. Meany emphasized that the membership figure does not include more than 1,500,000 AFL members now serving in the armed forces.

"The rate of increase in membership has declined from the 1941-1948 period during which remarkable organization gains were scored as the scope of war industry was expanded," Mr. Meany declared. "Nevertheless, the growth of the Federation has been steady and gratifying. We hope and expect that our total membership will top the seven million mark by the time our annual convention opens in New Orleans on November 20."

Detailed membership figures, giving the dues-paid totals of each affiliated national and international union, will be included in Mr. Meany's financial report to the convention, which is an official and audited document available to public inspection.

AFL Warns Of Dire Jobless Crisis Unless Reconversion Is Speeded

Washington, D. C.—The nation will not escape unemployment reaching at least 11,000,000 unless reconversion speeds up shortly after Nazi Germany capitulates, Boris Shishkin, economist of the American Federationist warns in its current issue.

In the year after the defeat of the Reich this total of unemployed will be reduced to "not less than 4,000,000" while the war against Japan is still in progress.

After the defeat of Japan there may be a "deadly depression" in which a total of 20,000,000 Americans will be unemployed unless effective steps are taken immediately to forestall such a catastrophe.

These conclusions highlight an article by Boris Shishkin, economist of the American Federation of Labor, in the Federationist. Mr. Shishkin says:

"At the peak of activity there were more than 10,000,000 less war than peace production and services other than agriculture. A 60 percent cut in government purchases after V-E Day will deprive nearly 9,000,000 persons of their jobs.

"At about the same time these discharges from the armed forces will increase substantially. About 1,250,000 have already been discharged. Discharges are now running at the rate of about 100,000 a month. Current unemployment is slightly over 100,000.

"After victory in Europe, at least 11,000,000 persons now working will be without jobs."

Asserting that "we don't seem to be prepared to use any of the resources to the great threat inherent in the severe decline in consumers buying power which will occur "unless safeguards are soon provided."

These include that of (1) shortening of hours and elimination of overtime, (2) cut in employment, and (3) downgrading. Mr. Shishkin writes, would be to cut payrolls 40 percent—a drop from $80,000,000,000 to $48,000,000,000. Such a cut, he adds, is "enough to knock the bottom out of the civilian market and the war."

"When the war is finally won," Mr. Shishkin declares, "we can look forward to high level of employment only if we achieve a level of production without any precedent in the past. Unless we bring production well above prewar levels would spell disaster. If production is raised to 1939, or prewar, level of production while present prices continue to prevail, we can-

AFL Fight On Anti-Labor Proposals Enters Last Lap In Three States

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor is rallying its forces for the final round it its battle to defeat vicious anti-labor initiative legislation which will be submitted to the voters of three states—California, Michigan and Missouri—on Nov. 7.

In each state proposed constitutional amendments are to be on the ballots which outlaw all "union shop" agreements and create chaos in labor relations in the very midst of the war.

Just about the hottest fight in raging in California. There, however, organized labor has rallied an amazing amount of public support against the Sharp amendment, which is sponsored mainly by the "open shop" interests of Southern California and the Associated Farmers of California.

A state-wide citizens' committee opposed to the amendment has been set up under the chairmanship of Professor Max Radin of the University of California. The Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Townsend movement have joined forces with labor to defeat the obnoxious proposal.

Many employers' groups, including the State Chamber of Commerce, have gone on record against the amendment, and in San Francisco, Alfred J. Lundberg, president of the Key Transportation System and former president of the chamber, heads a committee of business men opposed to the amendment. Many employees of industrialists are also active on labor's side in the fight. Leaders of church groups—Protestant, Catholic and Jewish—have likewise enlisted in the battle.

In both Florida and Arkansas, much non-labor support has also been mobilized in the struggle. Leaders of the State Federations of Labor disclosed. President Leo H. Hill of the Florida Federation said organized labor and employers of union labor are going on the air and warning the public that the amendment would disrupt labor relations and imperil the state's industrial expansion.

Meanwhile, the AFL, has appealed to affiliates all over the nation to contribute to a fund to help defeat the legislation in the 3 states. Wealthy anti-labor interests in each state have already raised big "war chests" to put over the restrictive laws.

Also, the AFL has created it would give legal and financial help to local unions in cities where attempts are made to frame out union officials and business agents through imposition of prohibitive license fees.

TAXI DRIVERS PLEDGE $17,000 FOR RELIEF

Philadelphia. — The United War Chests campaign here got off to a flying start with a pledge of contributions totaling $17,000 from Taxicab Drivers Union, Local No. 156 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

The union's 1,700 members, employed by the Yellow Cab Company, will give an average of $10 apiece to make up the total, it was announced.

AFL Group Opens Drive To Aid Foreign Labor

Green Endorses National War Fund

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green warmly endorsed the drive of the National War Fund to raise funds for war and community relief activities during the coming year.

Mr. Green's message, scheduled to be broadcast over a nation-wide radio network on Oct. 14, follows:

"The membership of the American Federation of Labor gladly responds to the call of our country for support of the National War Fund and, through it, of community relief funds.

"The work in which labor is engaged can be properly classified as humanitarian service in the interest and in support of our fighting forces. Labor everywhere is continually extending needed relief and friendship to millions of victims of ruthless aggression in foreign lands. In addition, labor's cooperation with local community chests serves to provide the kind of assistance here at home which is so badly needed among so many unfortunate families.

"The men and women of labor are prepared not only to give in accordance with their means but to assume a full measure of responsibility in the task of collecting voluntary gifts of other labor members.

"Labor can be relied upon to continue its support to our fighting forces abroad and those who are helpless and in need at home."

New York City.—Spearheading the American Federation of Labor's nationwide support of this month's campaign of the United War Relief Fund, more than 750,000 AFL shipyard workers on the west coast will donate a day's pay to this drive for relief at home and abroad, according to Matthew Woll, President of the Labor League for Human Rights, relief arm of the AFL.

The Los Angeles Building Trades Council, covering over 50,000 AFL members, has passed a resolution setting October 20 as AFL Construction Industry Day, when members of the construction trades unions will make contributions to the Los Angeles War Chest.

Shipyard workers in Portland, Tacoma, Seattle, in the Lake Superior area, and in Dallas, have completed special solicitation plans which are expected to result in speedy fulfillment of their War Chest goals. Similar plans have been adopted by the machinists and building trades in Buffalo, N. Y., and by the machinists in the Cincinnati area, once enslaved.

At the same time, the executive committee of the League, meeting in New York as the drive opened, called upon international unions and central bodies to extend their financial support and wholehearted support" in this year's campaign. The executive committee's resolution said:

"This year the American Federation of Labor, through the Labor War Chest Campaign, League for Human Rights, is undertaking its third campaign on behalf of Community War Chests, its second on behalf of the National War Fund. In the campaigns of 1942 and 1943, contributions of the American Federation of Labor have made an outstanding record as generous contributors to war relief and community causes, and they have, in these two years, taken an increasingly active and responsible part in the governing committees of Community and War Chests.

"Now, with victory approaching in Europe, both the opportunities for extending relief abroad, and the moral obligations for such relief, are greater than ever. In addition to supporting general relief activities in the liberated countries, organized labor is preparing an independent relief program, to be sponsored by the free and democratic trade union movements of these countries. This program will aid especially those in concentration camps or from forced labor. It will establish homes for destitute war orphans. It will bring immediate and urgently needed assistance to workers who have suffered most severely.

"For this reason, and because of increased needs among our armed forces and on the home front, the executive committee of the League is convinced that the international unions and central labor bodies affiliated with the American Federation of Labor will extend their generous and wholehearted support to this year's War Chest Campaign."

750,000 AFL Workers Give Day's Pay To Back Drive of National War Fund

AN EDITORIAL

Germany And Peace

By WILLIAM GREEN,
President, American Federation of Labor
(Reprinted from The American Federationist)

The natural resources of Germany, its machine tools and its chemical industries have in past years provided other countries of Europe with basic materials on which their economies depend.

Germany has a closely knit population bound together by language and historical tradition. It has been a leading industrial country. Pre-Nazi Germany made valuable contributions to civilization and culture. If we give German opportunity to rebuild its industries, we cripple the nation and erect a hindrance to prosperity in other countries.

Our peace problem is to curb the German lust for aggression which in a short span has twice plunged the world into destructive wars. We cannot establish lasting peace by repressing Germany's creative potentialities or closing its opportunities for progress.

The experience, the ability and resources of the German people should be put to the service of all instead of being used to dominate all. Neither nations nor individuals can reach the plane of full development until they dedicate themselves to service to others.

As a safeguard of democratic institutions we should restore Germany's free trade union movement.

During the time in which Germany must be under surveillance, control should be lodged with the United Nations. The terms of peace should undergird our military victory.

Antonini Urges More Help to Italy To Avert Communist Upheaval There

Atlantic City.—Immediate substantial help for Italy as part of a larger program to speed her economic rehabilitation was urged by Luigi Antonini, vice president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, as the sole means of avoiding a Communist upheaval in that country.

Mr. Antonini just returned from Italy as a member of an Anglo-American labor mission sent to assist in the rehabilitation of democratic Italian labor movement. Before going to Washington to report to President William Green of the American Federation of Labor, he reported to the general executive board of the I.L.G.W.U. meeting here, on his general observations during his six-week stay in Italy.

Mr. Antonini drew a somber picture of the situation, marked by mass unemployment, hunger, despair, prostitution, delinquency and painful disappointment in the Allies' not having "helped the Italian people help themselves." He characterized the recent proposals of the International Labor Relations Administration as "a drop in the bucket."

What the Italian people resent particularly, Mr. Antonini said, is the refusal of the Allied Control Commission to grant the Government of Premier Ivanoe Bonomi equal more latitude in that it may function more effectively in its efforts to alleviate the disaster in the absence of adequate action by the Allies themselves. Mr. Antonini, who was received by the Pope, quoted him as saying:

"The great democracies must show greater interest and concern for Italy if she is not to plunge from one disaster into another."

WLB Action On Wage-Freeze Depends On The Effect On Prices

Washington, D. C.—The National War Labor Board began final consideration of labor's demands for relaxation of the wage-freeze with a disclosure by Chairman William H. Davis that its findings will depend largely upon the effect on living costs.

While the board cannot decide the issue on its own authority, it can and will make recommendations to the President who has the power to revise the "Little Steel" formula.

The nature of the board's recommendations rests with its public members, since the labor representatives and industry representatives are sharply divided on the wage issue.

An indication as to the attitude of the public members was given by Mr. Davis at a press conference when he said:

"We are not gods or curmudgeons. The problem is not to be decided by our good nature, generosity or penuriousness. The problem is whether a hardship has been imposed by the stabilization regulations.

"The problem is, if you adjust wages upward, will it get you anywhere or will it [illegible] everybody loss, including those who got the change in policy.

"If a hardship has been imposed by the regulations the next question is, is it an unavoidable hardship, that can it be removed without imposing a greater hardship—inflation? There is no point in giving a man a wage increase if it is going to be taken from him in higher prices."

Mr. Davis said that it was up to the labor board to determine whether present rules created inequities and undue hardships and if so, whether changes could be made in them without creating price rises and worse inequities.

As to how the public members approached the problem of prices, the chairman said it was being done "in a confused state of mind and the attempt would be to see if it can be clarified."

"The obligations the board assumed require us to conduct the discussions as far as practicable with minds free from every manner of prejudice and free from all passion," Mr. Davis added.

The entire opening day, he said, was spent in exchanging views on the general tenor of the evidences submitted to the board by the American Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, various other unions, and the employers.

Aged Boilermaker Returns To Work To Help War Production Effort

Kansas City.—Thousands of elderly workers have come out of retirement during the war and contributed their skill to the war effort, but one of the most dramatic instances of that was cited by the "Boilermakers' Journal" in its October issue.

The "Journal's" story told of Albert M. Dustin, one of the oldest members of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, who at the age of 76 years, went to work in the shipyard at Santa Monica, Calif., and for 2 years did a bang-up job.

Dustin first joined the Boilermakers back in 1892 when it was a fledgling union, barely a dozen years old. He has remained in good standing ever since, except for brief periods when he was a foreman. He now holds a card in Local No. 11, Minneapolis.

Dustin was living in retirement in California when Pearl Harbor came and he decided to do his bit for the war effort. Douglas Aircraft snapped him up and as the "Journal" pointed out, "on account of his ability, he was made a trouble shooter over 8 departments."

Commenting on his great work, the "Journal" declared: "These are the kind of people who make the world safe for democracy. More power to such men as Albert Dustin."

WOLL HEADS COMMITTEE TO RAISE $1,000,000 FOR LABOR ABROAD

Woll Heads Committee To Raise $1,000,000 For Labor Abroad

New York City. — Matthew Woll, vice-president of the American Federation of Labor, announced the formation of a Free Trade Union Committee by the Labor League for Human Rights, relief arm of the AFL, for the purpose of raising a minimum of $1,000,000 from AFL members during January, 1945, to aid in the re-establishment of independent democratic trade unions in Europe and South America.

According to the formal statement issued by Mr. Woll, who is president of the Labor League for Human Rights and will be chairman of the newly organized committee, this move is an outgrowth of the American Federation of Labor's conviction that "without a free trade union movement, it will be impossible to rebuild a democratic Europe."

"A permanently crushed labor movement abroad," the statement declares, "will mean that we have failed to win the war of ideas for which we have been fighting against Nazism and Fascism."

Pointing out the probable effects of such a failure on American labor, American industry, and the future peace of the world, Mr. Woll warned that "forced and impoverished labor in Europe will lead to the flooding of world markets with cheap commodities. It will be a threat to American industry and will inevitably result in a dangerously lowered standard of living for American workers. Beyond all this the existence of forced and impoverished labor in Europe will set the stage for violent economic conflicts which cannot but lead to a third world war."

The American Federation of Labor now constitutes the most powerful and vigorous democratic labor organization in the world," he continued. "It is to us that the workers of Europe are looking for the vitally needed practical assistance that must be forthcoming if their trade unions are to be speedily and democratically rebuilt.

"In accepting this task, the AFL recognizes that organized workers anywhere have a moral right and obligation to assist their fellow workers everywhere. More than that, it has been made evident through the tragic events of the past decade that free trade union movements are the strongest bulwarks of peaceful and democratic nations. In addition, the restoration of Europe's free trade unions will be the most effective way to maintain existing high living standards of American workers, since it will eliminate the ruthless competition resulting from oppressed, underpaid, slave or forced labor abroad.

"Pledged to stand by the democratic forces within the European labor movement in their continuing fight against all forms of totalitarianism can mean the end of genuine democracy in Europe for a century to come," the statement concludes.

The entire membership of the AFL, Mr. Woll said, will be mobilized for the January drive of the Free Trade Union Committee. Funds will be raised by local unions of the AFL through the fund-raising apparatus of the Labor League for Human Rights, which includes hundreds of local Labor League committees all over the country, as well as twenty-two regional directors. This is the same fund-raising apparatus which in the past two years has helped raise almost $70,000,000 from AFL members for distribution to the National War Fund, Community Chest and the American Red Cross through the United Nations Relief Committee of the League.

THIS EX-SERVICEMAN GOES FOR UNIONS

Portland, Ore.—The tangible help given by unions to honorably discharged servicemen was the way such assistance is appreciated were sharply illustrated in the publication of Local No. 63 of the International Association of Machinists here.

The union published a letter received from a returned veteran who had served in South Pacific battles and who was helped to find a job by the local. The veteran was admitted into union membership without initiation fee and was given a set of tools free with the compliments of the union. The ex-serviceman, Paul S. Yale, then responded with the following letter:

"During the time I have served overseas with [illegible] catch, and especially the last month in New Guinea, unionism was maligned by the press and radio until we wondered if that what the future of the service men and the unions would be after the war.

"Now I have received the answer from Local No. 63. From now on I am spreading the good word by mail to my gang overseas. I hope that in giving them the true side of the picture I can convince them that they are not destined to become 'forgotten men'."